Was there a Particular Way of Knowing that was most important in the Decision about whether Data was the Property of Star Fleet?

All the ways of knowing: Reason, Sense Perception, Emotion and Language were present in the decision making process of whether or not Data was property of Star Fleet.

When Commander Riker was arguing that Data was indeed property of the Star Fleet, he made use of Reason. He removed Data’s hand and used the manual switch to turn Data off. This is proved by deductive reasoning because:

* Premise 1: Data has a manual switch
* Premise 2: All Androids have manual switches
* Conclusion: Data is an Android

By doing this he was proving that Data was indeed an android and therefore property of Star Fleet. He also made use of language by keeping his voice monotonous throughout his testimony and asking Data to speak. When Data spoke he mentioned all the qualities that made him an android, his language helped to prove Commander Riker’s point. Commander Riker referred to Data as Pinocchio at the end of his testimony when he switched of his manual switch Riker said that Pinocchio’s strings had been cut. By comparing Data to a puppet, Riker makes us envision Data as an object with no control over itself, because it is instead controlled by others. Since we know that language is intended we can say that Riker was going for this effect. Sense perception was used when everyone in the room saw Data bend the steel rod, this proved his strength. They all also witnessed the removal of Data’s hand. During his testimony Commander Riker put emotion aside, because he did not believe that Data was indeed property of the Star Fleet and he knew that his own emotions would work against him.

Captain Picard made use of sense perception when he brought in Data’s belongings and showed everyone. By seeing these belongings and how Data cherishes them everyone could see that Data was more than just an Android because he had things that he prized and appreciated more than others. Picard used Reason as well in his testimony, he managed to prove that Data carried out at least 2 of the 3 features needed to prove that he was more than just an android: Intelligence and Self-awareness, the last is consciousness. Picard used emotion by showing it through his questioning and showing everyone that Data could show it as well. When Captain Picard brought out Data’s belongings, he proved that Data had feelings too. After being shown a hologram of Tasha, Data admitted to having been intimate with her, this showed everyone that Data could experience feelings that humans did too. Data had emotions. Captain Picard was kind when he was talking to Data and angrier when questioning Maddox, this expression of emotion portrayed Maddox as the bad guy and helped to paint Data in a kinder light. Captain Picard used language in his testimony when he spoke with a sincere respectful voice to Data; he spoke to him as a friend. Whereas when he was questioning Maddox his voice was loud, he was shouting at some points in his speech. His words also undermined Maddox’s status, when he said “Yes, yes, yes, he’s an expert” the tone of his voice was demeaning and this lessened Maddox’s importance in the eyes of everyone else. Mentioning that Maddox was an expert was an important piece of Picard’s testimony. Maddox couldn’t answer some of the questions regarding Data’s state of being, even though he was an ‘expert’.

As we have seen, all four ways of knowing were used when determining whether Data was property of Star Fleet and they were all key aspects of the case. Picard won the case and he made use of all 4 ways of knowing whereas Riker had only used 3. The success of Picard’s testimony proves to us that all the ways of knowing were necessary when it came to making the decision of whether or not Data was property of Star Fleet.